

NDCSWINST 5230.2
02MID
18 May 1998

NAVDENCEN SOUTHWEST INSTRUCTION 5230.2

Subj: ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-MAIL) USE POLICY

Ref: (a) SECNAVINST 5239.3
(b) BUMEDINST 5230.4

Encl: (1) Electronic Mail (E-Mail) and Freedom of Information/Privacy Act
Guidelines

1. Purpose. To provide policy and guidance concerning the use of E-Mail for conducting business within Naval Dental Center Southwest (NDCSW), San Diego.
2. Background. E-Mail is a new tool available within NDCSW that can aid the smooth, efficient, and timely conduct of business. E-Mail accounts, available via Naval Dental Center Southwest, allow information to be informally sent and received at the convenience of staff using the resource. E-Mail allows quick query and reporting of time-sensitive information between the field and headquarters. Information contained in E-Mail is considered official correspondence and may be retained as necessary.
3. Responsibilities. These accounts are approved for conducting NDCSW business. Appropriate automatic data processing (ADP) security and access measures must be maintained per references (a) and (b). Further guidance is provided in enclosure (1).
 - a. Key users in each clinic/department are responsible for "checking their E-Mail and responding accordingly."
 - b. MID department will establish and maintain E-Mail accounts for designated users.
4. Action. All E-Mail should be processed on the receiving end and distributed following local correspondence procedures.
 - a. Staff members requiring E-Mail use will prepare and send the text to be transmitted. Retaining a copy of transmitted E-Mail provides a date/time indicator for record purposes. A designated individual responsible for the account will check each user's E-Mail account for incoming messages at a minimum of once daily.
 - b. Management Information Department (MID) will establish and maintain E-Mail accounts for the following positions:
 - (1) Executive Suite: CO, XO, CMC, CO Secretary, DFA, DFA Secretary and DCS.

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(2) Special Advisors: CCC, Credentials, DAPA, Reserve Liaison, Safety, Environmental and TQL.

(3) Branch Directors and SELs.

(4) Command Consultants: Comprehensive Dentistry, Endodontics, Operative, Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Orthodontics, Pediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, Prostodontics, Public Health and TMD.

(5) Headquarters Department Key Users.

(6) Branch Generic Accounts for staff use.

c. Each branch clinic will be assigned a generic E-Mail account to be used by any clinic personnel conducting official business.

d. Branch Directors will review requests for additional E-Mail accounts. Request must be justified and forwarded in writing to Head, Management Information Department via Executive Officer.

R. C. MELENDEZ

Dist.:
List 1, Case 1, 2
ADP Security Officer
Clinic ADP Maintenance Tech.

ELECTRONIC MAIL (E-Mail) AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACT GUIDANCE

1. Users of the E-Mail system should be aware that this new method of communication is not exempt from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U. S. C., section 552 (1982 & Supp. IV 1986) or Privacy Act, 5 U. S. C., section 552a (1982 & Supp. IV 1986.) Problems may arise due to the ease and informality of the system, coupled with permanence no readily apparent.
2. The E-Mail system aids rapid transmission of information among commands. The user accesses the system via an individualized password and may then send or receive messages through a centralized computer network. Incoming messages are stored in a "host computer" that is linked by modem to the user's personal computer. After reading messages, the recipient may delete them, or may store them on the host computer hard disk, on his or her own computer, or in printout form. A short-term system for E-Mail stores messages for 24-hour periods.
3. FOIA provides any person a right of access to all information maintained by Federal agencies, unless exempted by the statute. FOIA applies to information stored in any form, including paper, ADP storage media, and computer printouts. Thus E-Mail transmissions are subject to FOIA from the moment they are created until they no longer exist. Hard copies of E-Mail messages also fall under FOIA.
4. The Privacy Act (PA) provides individuals a right of access to records pertaining to themselves, while barring disclosure to others in the absence of an exemption. The PA only applies to records filed and retrieved by an individual's name, social security number, or other personal-identifier. While messages on the E-Mail system are usually not subject to the Privacy Act since they are filed and retrieved by sequential number, the PA may apply if the recipient stores the message, either in the computer or in paper form, by an individual's name or personal identifier.
5. An important aspect of any communications system is security. All E-Mail users should ensure that access to the system is limited to those with authorization. Unauthorized disclosures may violate the Privacy Act or waive otherwise applicable FOIA exemptions. In those instances where disclosure of E-Mail communications is not desired, the following procedures are recommended.
 - a. Promptly delete E-Mail messages you do not desire to retain. Remember that E-Mail stays in the E-Mail folder until it is affirmatively deleted. Reading E-Mail will not delete it. Within 24 hours, deleted messages will be permanently erased from the "host computer system."
 - b. Do not retain hard copies of E-Mail. Also, be aware that filing messages by an individual's name or personal identifier may bring them within the purview of the Privacy Act.
 - c. When communicating sensitive information, consider using the telephone in lieu of E-Mail. Conversations are not subject to FOIA or the Privacy Act, although notes taken during a conversation may be. In summary, when information transmitted by E-Mail is retained, in any form, it should be treated as any other government record.

